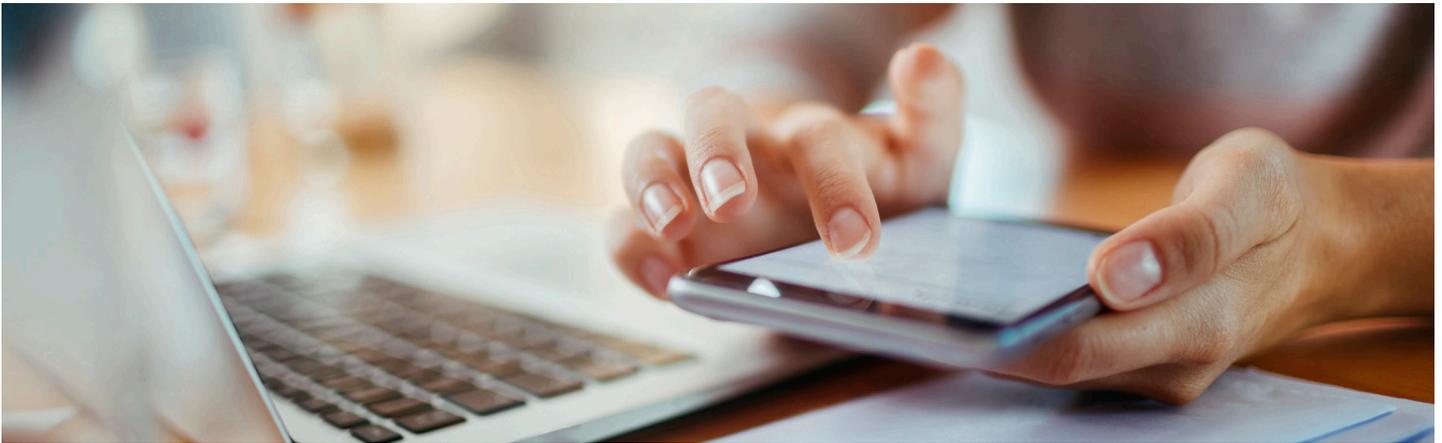


# Crisis Communication Toolkit

## WORKFLOWS, TIPS & TOOLS



From cyber security breaches to natural disasters to worldwide pandemics, the nature of a crisis is vast and unpredictable. Board members and management teams are responsible for developing decisive yet flexible response plans that can accommodate a wide variety of scenarios.

When crisis response plans are triggered, cascading actions are set into motion across the business. Executives must trust the plans they put in place. Board members must stand ready to support business continuity. In the end, the impact of a crisis is rarely determined by the crisis itself, but rather the quality of the organisation's response.

Technology is a critical enabler during times of uncertainty. Crisis response teams must have secure channels of communication. Data must be accessible. Sensitive documents must remain protected. Virtual meeting technology must keep teams connected.

In the simplest terms, company leaders must have the right information at their fingertips to make the right decisions. This guide explores two primary components of crisis response—preparedness and agility—and the technology structures that support them.

### In This Guide

---

- 1. Crisis Response Tips for Boards & Company Leaders**
- 2. Crisis Response Workflow: Actions & Tools**
- 3. Crisis Preparation Workflow: Actions & Tools**

## CRISIS RESPONSE TIPS



### FOR MANAGEMENT

---

- ▶ **Communicate early, often, and with transparency.** Even if you don't have all the answers, the importance of communication is elevated during crisis times. Consider each stakeholder group (employees, shareholders, investors, suppliers, exchanges, government, etc.) over both a short- and long-term horizon. How are their fears and uncertainties shifting and how must your message evolve in the weeks ahead? Connect and engage often with purpose and humility.
- ▶ **Be decisive, yet flexible.** Identify the areas that need attention and allocate resources accordingly, but have plans for pivoting quickly, as needed. The crisis response team should include diverse members who gather the insights required for better decision-making.
- ▶ **Delegate authority.** A CEO cannot lead alone during times of crisis. Empower leaders across the company to step up and support the executive team with consistent actions and messages. Open lines of communication are critical to ensure alignment.

### FOR BOARD MEMBERS

---

- ▶ **Activate your experience.** Boards possess unique sets of experiences and 'lessons learned' that they can draw on in times of crisis. Directors should stand ready to galvanise their network of contacts and resources in response to the needs of management.
- ▶ **Be available.** Make it clear that the board is "on call"—ready and willing to engage. Support management in carrying out the crisis plan. Think twice about probing into areas that don't support the task at hand - ask whether the issue warrants distracting executives from addressing crisis priorities, or whether those issues could wait for another day.
- ▶ **Stay focused on the long-term.** As management attends to day-to-day crisis response, how can board members ensure a stronger organisation emerges on the other side? From supply chains to employee relations, organisations can't miss the opportunity to become more flexible, sustainable, and resilient.

## HOW TO LEVERAGE DILIGENT TOOLS



### RESPONDING TO CRISIS

Organisations don't always have the luxury of advanced preparation. Even when they can draw on existing crisis plans, boards and management teams must remain nimble, focused, connected—and uncompromising on safety and security. Here's what that workflow could look like:

#### 1. Contact Response Teams Using Secured Channels

##### ACTIONS

---

- ▶ Notify the board and any relevant internal stakeholders and external stakeholders (e.g., PR agency, law firm).
- ▶ Establish or activate secure communication channel(s) for the crisis response team. Limit these channels to important, crisis-related updates, only.
- ▶ Brief the crisis response team. Share all relevant information, current details, and documents via secure channels.

##### TOOLS

---

- ▶ **Diligent Messenger** enables secure communication across the crisis response team. Accessible across all devices, this platform supports both group and peer-to-peer conversations.
- ▶ **Diligent Boards** centralises and secures information shared with the board. It also supports voting, minute-taking, and scheduling.
- ▶ **Diligent Secure File Sharing** enables sensitive documents to be shared with permissioned users (e.g., consultants, lawyers).



## 2. Establish Processes for Meetings & Information Flow

### ACTIONS

---

- ▶ Establish intelligence sources to inform ongoing crisis response (e.g., news coverage, public sentiment, crisis developments).
- ▶ Determine format and cadence for providing updates to key stakeholders (e.g., daily stand-up, dashboards, regular CEO updates to the board).
- ▶ Determine how information and important updates will flow down & across.
- ▶ Continue to maintain secure channels for all communication and document-sharing.

### TOOLS

---

- ▶ **Diligent Governance Intel** tracks daily news coverage and public sentiment (tailored to your company and to the crisis). Sentiment analysis illuminates potential risk areas.
- ▶ **Diligent Messenger, Diligent Boards** and **Diligent Secure File Sharing** continue to secure ongoing communication and document share.
- ▶ **Diligent Secure Meeting Workflow** protects sensitive documents as they are being created. Permissioned users can collaborate in one secure workflow.

## 3. Communicate with All Stakeholders

### ACTIONS

---

- ▶ Ensure communication is tailored to each stakeholder group (e.g., employees, customers, shareholders, regulators, communities).
- ▶ Be aware of laws and regulations related to notification timelines (e.g., cyber breach regulations, HIPPA laws).
- ▶ Monitor stakeholder responses and ongoing developments.

### TOOLS

---

- ▶ **Diligent Entities** and **Diligent Assurance** provide quick reports across subsidiaries and updates on regulatory compliance pertaining to the crisis (e.g., GDPR).
- ▶ **Diligent Governance Intel** allows users to refine their intelligence reports across news, stakeholder groups, markets, and regulatory environments.

Be alert also to the opportunities that a crisis provides. Stressful situations reveal which executives have the disposition and talent to manage effectively in a crisis.

- Alex Wolff, Board Member of Albemarle Corporation, PG&E Corporation, JetSmart Holdings, and Frontier Airlines

## PREPARING FOR CRISIS

Crisis response planning is a crucial exercise by the board and management team. Organisations must anticipate a range of crisis scenarios that could negatively impact the business, and they must establish the company's response strategy spanning stakeholder communication, operational contingencies, and board involvement. Here's what that process could look like:

### 1. Anticipate Crises and Develop Response Plans

#### ACTIONS

---

- ▶ Anticipate potential crises and rank them by business impact. Identify those that would require a similar company response.
- ▶ Outline a few core response plans that could flex for different scenarios. Consider response triggers, communication strategies, and key players (both internal and external).
- ▶ Establish a central location for these crisis plans to live. Must be secure and accessible remotely by board members and management.

#### TOOLS

---

- ▶ **Diligent Boards** provides a central repository for scenario plans and response strategies—and it enables board members and executives to securely exchange critical information.

### 2. Build a Rapid Response Infrastructure

#### ACTIONS

---

- ▶ Establish a communication infrastructure for crisis situations (i.e., channels for secure messaging and document share).
- ▶ Don't overlook the importance of data integrity and security in crisis times. Ensure important subsidiary and regulatory information is up-to-date and accessible. Remember that cyber risk tends to increase in times of crisis.
- ▶ Conduct authentic run-throughs of your crisis plans to patch gaps and build muscle memory.

#### TOOLS

---

- ▶ **Diligent Messenger** secures all messages between executives, boards, and crisis response team members. Leverage in crisis times, but also for daily communication.
- ▶ **Diligent Secure File Sharing** protects sensitive materials while at rest, in transit, and in progress. Grant user permissions—both internal and external (i.e., trusted third parties).
- ▶ **Diligent Entities** and **Diligent Assurance** ensure accurate corporate record data and regulatory visibility during crisis situations. Pull quick reports and identify red flags by maintaining a “single source of truth”.

### 3. Monitor Systems for Red Flags

#### ACTIONS

- ▶ Develop a system for crisis monitoring that maps back to each crisis scenario.
- ▶ Establish various intelligence sources and define what constitutes as red flags or triggers.
- ▶ Extend these reports or tools to appropriate members of the board, management team, and crisis response team.

#### TOOLS

- ▶ **Diligent Governance Intel** supports regular monitoring of company reputation, industry trends, regulatory updates, and crisis triggers (tailored to your company).
- ▶ **CGLytics** provides visibility into governance health and board effectiveness. Identify potential red flags in the eyes of your shareholders.

A crisis response is the operationalisation of your culture in real time. Do you take care of your employees? Do you take care of your customers? It is the chance to define your company.

- Betsy Atkins, Founder of Baja Corporation, three-time CEO



#### Ready to See Diligent Tools in Action?

Diligent streamlines the day-to-day work of boards and executives, secures the flow of information, and delivers the kind of insights that lead to better decision-making. We call this modern governance. To learn more, request a demo or contact our team.

[REQUEST A DEMO](#)